



Writing skills key for all Airmen

Week of Aug. 29, 2007 – Sept. 4, 2007

Writing well is essential to good Airmanship

Whether writing an e-mail, a letter of appreciation or an official memorandum, good writing skills are important tools for Airmen. When you send any type of written communication, it represents you and your organization.

Something to keep in mind about writing is that it lacks certain aspects of face-to-face communication, such as tone, inflection and body language. Therefore, good grammar, proper spelling and appropriate word choice are essential to communicating messages effectively. According to the Air Force Professional Development Guide, there are seven steps for effective communication:

- Analyze purpose and audience - know why you're writing and who will see it
- Research your topic - from asking supervisors, to scanning the internet, to reviewing technical orders, information you may need when writing is out there. You just need to know where to look
- Support your ideas - any statement without citing a reference is considered an opinion. Use statistics, definitions and facts to support your claim
- Organize - there are several formats a writer can use, such as comparing and contrasting, a chronological account of events, or presenting a problem and following up with a solution. Organizing your writing will help your reader understand your point and avoid confusion
- Draft - get your thoughts down, whether written on paper or typed on a computer
- Edit - this is where you look for spelling, grammatical and typographical errors
- Fight for feedback - get others to look over your work. Corrective feedback is both positive and shouldn't be taken personally. What's most important is getting your message across

The written word is a powerful tool and is used throughout your career. But it's not necessarily easy. The sooner you learn how to write, and the more you write, the better you'll get at it. Knowing about some of your resources -- such as a dictionary, thesaurus or the Tongue and Quill writing guide (Air Force Handbook 33-337) -- will help you succeed, improve your writing and communicate effectively.

Find Airman's Roll Call Online Here: <http://www.af.mil/library/viewpoints/>

Airman's Roll Call is designed for supervisors at all levels to help keep Airmen informed on current issues, clear up confusion, dispel rumors, and provide additional face-to-face communication between supervisors and their teams.